

Fox & Friends

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Gretchen Carlson, Co-Host: Joining us now is [Leonard Leo](#) ; he is the Chairman of the United States Commission on International Freedom. Good morning to you, Mr. Leo.

Leonard Leo / US Commission on International Religious Freedom: Yes, good morning.

Gretchen Carlson: Very interested in just sort of taking off from Brian's last question about the spread of this ideology throughout the rest of the Middle Eastern world; your comments on that?

Leonard Leo: Well, of course, Alwaki's killing today is very significant and important, but what we have to remember is that his ideas live and continue to penetrate much of the world. So, we have countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan where their educational systems and textbooks promulgate the same kind of anti-Western Jihadist rhetoric and ideology. We have countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan and Iran, where there are laws on the books that help to embolden people like him, and help to build a culture of terrorism and violence and extremism. So, we need to be vigilant throughout the world to make sure that there isn't this kind of exportation of extremist, anti-human rights, anti-religious ideology that perpetuates this kind of terrorism.

Brian Kilmeade, Co-Host: How important is it to expose what hypocrites and how insincere these terrorists are? I mean, just about everyone to a man when picked up has a history with prostitutes, porn magazines—I mean, these guys don't live the life in which they portray themselves, where they live and die by the Quran.

Leonard Leo: You are absolutely right, and what we have to remember is not only are their personal codes necessarily weak, but they're also very much against their own fellow Muslims. One of the largest populations that suffers from this kind of extremist ideology are Muslims who these extremists believe don't conform to the right kind of Islam. So it's not just Christians and Westerners who suffer from these terrorists; it's peaceable, loving Muslims all around the world who don't want to conform to their extremist ideology.

Steve Doocy, Co-Host: That's right, and Leonard, one of the things about this guy, while he's been, apparently, taken out, killed over in Yemen this morning: he was born in the United States. He was born in New Mexico, and he was, you know, a Muslim preacher, he was an Imam in mosques in California and Colorado and Washington DC as well. And you've got to wonder, over the years, how many people did he turn his way?

Leonard Leo: Well, first of all, he turned a lot of people his way. We know he turned some very significant people: the underwear bomber from Nigeria, the Fort Hood terrorist. So, he turned a lot of important figures, a couple of the, you know, 9/11 hijackers. But we also, we also know that this is a man who was educated in the Middle East, who took a "vacation" in Afghanistan at one point in his career. This is someone who's been around the extremists in the Middle Eastern region who have been exporting this kind of radical ideology in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, all over the Middle East, and now in the Western world.

Gretchen Carlson: It's interesting, because I know you're the Chair of the Commission on International Religious Freedom, but how do you rationalize that in your mind with regard to the kinds of freedoms, with regard to Muslim extremists?

Leonard Leo: Well, there is no place in the human rights world for violent extremism. Freedom of religion, belief in conscience, has nothing to do with an ideology that calls for the spilling of the blood of the infidel, Christians or Jews. Religious freedom has nothing to do with oppressing Muslims who have a different view of Islam than an extremist might have. And the problem is that we have governments around the world like Saudi Arabia, Iran, North Sudan, Afghanistan, that have constitutions and penal codes that embolden terrorists to take the law into their own hands and to punish people who they believe don't share the right religious views. That's not religious freedom, that's not human rights. That's old fashioned terrorism, extremism, and violence.

Gretchen Carlson: Alright. Leonard Leo, the Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. Thank you so much for your thoughts this morning.

Leonard Leo: Thank you very much. Have a good day.

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